

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN JM

SUBJECT: GROWING SHORTAGES IN BASIC FOODS PLAGUE

JAMAICA

1. GROWING SHORTAGES IN BASIC FOOD STUFFS ARE PLAGUING THE ALREADY BELEAGUERED JAMAICAN ECONOMY . AFFECTED ITEMS INCLUDE RICE, COOKING OIL, RED BEANS, AND ODDLY ENOUGH, SUGAR. DISORDERS IN SUPERMARKETS AND FOOD OUTLETS ARE FREQUENT AND SOME HAVE BEEN SO VIOLENT THAT THE POLICE HAVE BEEN CALLED TO RESTORE ORDER. MOST STORE OWNERS ARE WIDELY SUSPECTED OF HOARDING SCARCE ITEMS WHILE THEY, IN TURN, COMPLAIN THAT THEY ARE COMPELLED TO OPERATE A RATIONINGSYSTEM WITHOUT THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. AT ONE PORT STEVEDORES STRUCK LAST WEEK AND REFUSED TO LOAD ANY MORE SUGAR FOR EXPORT WHILE THEIR WIVES WERE UNABLE TO FIND SUGAR ON STORE SHELVES (DESPITE THE FACT THAT EXPORT AND COMMERCIAL GRADES OF SUGAR ARE QUITE DIFFERENT).

2. SHORTAGES IN BASIC FOOD STUFFS HAVE ATTRACTED WIDESPREAD ATTENTION IN THE MEDIA, AND SOME EDITORIALISTS HAVE BEGUN TO CALL FOR GOVERNMENT RATIONING OF KEY ITEMS. OTHERS ARE PRESSING FOR STERNER ACTION AGAINST HOARDERS, WHILE THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAVE ASKED FOR A CLEAR
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STATEMENT OF A DEFINITION OF HOARDING AS OPPOSED TO

PRUDENT ALLOTMENT OF INADEQUATE SUPPLIES TO THEIR
CUSTOMERS BY FOOD MERCHANTS

3. COMMENT: SHORTAGES ARE ENDEMIC TO JAMAICA'S ISLAND
ECONOMY WHERE SO MANY ESSENTIALS MUST BE IMPORTED. THE
RECENT OUTBREAK OF SHORTAGES IN BASIC FOOD STUFFS
APPEARS TO BE MORE THE RESULT OF FAULTS IN THE ECONOMY'S
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND LACK OF FORWARD PLANNING THAN
IT IS TO THE ENERGY CRISIS. HOWEVER, THE ENERGY CRISIS
MAY BE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF
SHIP ARRIVALS AT JAMAICAN PORTS. HEWITT

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Message Attributes

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